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Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7609th meeting

Monday, 25 January 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Nin Novoa	(Uruguay)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gimolieca
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	Egypt	Mr. Mahmoud
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Akahori
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Identical letters dated 19 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2016/53)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Identical letters dated 19 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2016/53)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Colombia to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the members of the Security Council, I welcome Her Excellency Ms. Maria Ángela Holguín Cuéllar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2016/67, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by all the members of the Security Council. I thank the members of the Council for sponsoring the draft resolution, which is now a presidential text.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, China, Egypt, France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2261 (2016).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I would like to begin by welcoming you to the Chamber, Mr. President, as well as Foreign Minister Holguín Cuéllar.

The United Kingdom welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2261 (2016) today. The special political mission that the resolution mandates is an important step forward towards peace in Colombia. It is an outcome that both the Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia have called for. I pay tribute to the leadership shown, particularly by President Santos Calderón, in bringing this issue to the Council. I am pleased that the United Kingdom could lead the drafting of the resolution, and I am delighted that we received such strong support from all Council members.

The United Kingdom is a great supporter of the Colombian Government's efforts to secure peace — a peace that has, sadly, eluded Colombia for over five decades. In that time the Colombian people have shown great resilience. We welcome the progress made since the negotiations began, in 2012. The agreements already reached on rural development, political participation, illegal drugs and, most recently, victims' rights and transitional justice, are testament to the commitment of both parties. The joint communiqué issued last week, which sets out the monitoring mechanisms for the ceasefire and the cessation of hostilities, is another positive step towards the final peace agreement.

It is to the credit of the parties that they have worked together to bring this issue to the Council. It is not common for a country to refer itself to the Council, but that is exactly the sort of role the United Nations should be playing, namely, supporting conflict prevention and conflict resolution at the national level alongside others, including members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

I hope that today will mark the start of the final stage of Colombia's peace talks and that this resolution itself will help build confidence and momentum towards the final peace agreement. The United Kingdom will play its part by working with Colombia, other Council members and the Secretariat. Together we can ensure that the implementation of this resolution will be swift and effective so that it supports Colombia to realize a stable, prosperous future for all its citizens. To do so, I hope we can draw on the world unity shown today. It is that unity that we will need to sustain if we are to make progress in support of Colombia's peace agreement and on so many of the other issues that we face this year.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish

to extend a special greeting to Foreign Minister Maria Ángela Holguín Cuéllar on this very important day for her country and the future of the people of Colombia and all its children.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela co-sponsored and voted in favour of resolution 2261 (2016), for we are convinced that it constitutes clear support for the peace process in the sister nation of Colombia — a country to which Venezuela is inevitably joined by geography, culture, history and the integrationist legacy of Simón Bolívar, our liberator and common father of our countries, as well as the powerful determination of our peoples to live in harmony and peace. Venezuela and Colombia have always been together as a region and greater nation. The impetus for the revolution for independence in Latin America, led by the liberator Simón Bolívar, led to Colombians and Venezuelans helping each other and, in heroic deeds, to cross the Andes in order to bring freedom to New Granada in Boyacá, to Venezuela in Carabobo and to Ecuador in Pichincha — and finally, all us together as Latin Americans and as children of Gran Colombia, the greatest political creation of Simón Bolívar, to sealing our independence in the glorious battle of Ayacucho. It is that shared history that has kept Venezuela and Colombia together as brothers, and both of our nations are proud of that fact today and forever.

We are very pleased that the resolution just adopted recognizes and makes mention of Venezuela's contribution and commitment to dialogue and peace in our neighbouring country. In that context, we would like to take this opportunity to highlight the contribution of, and pay well-deserved tribute to, the tireless efforts and the determined political commitment to peace of Commander President Hugo Chávez Frías, who worked relentlessly, nobly and with sincere interest, friendship and Bolivarian willingness for peace in Colombia — one of his dearest wishes. For our country, today's resolution represents the continuation of his integrationist legacy.

For decades, we looked on with deep sorrow as our Colombian brothers fought each other in a conflict that passed through various phases and which had deep social roots and a complex political and ideological history. That protracted war, which lasted for more than five decades, brought with it a lamentable toll in terms of human lives, displaced people and destruction. In the light of that reality, our deeply Bolivarian country could not be indifferent to the pain and tragedy in our sister republic as a result of the conflict.

That is why we welcomed thousands of refugees and people displaced by war, victims of the various factions of the armed conflict in Colombia. In that way, the people and the Government of Venezuela have helped and continuously contributed to the peace process and opened its doors and its arms to those who were forced to flee violence and threats to their personal safety. More than 5 million Colombian brothers and sisters, legal and illegal migrants alike, as well as refugees, are now living in Venezuela. We have taken them in like the brothers and sisters that they are. Venezuela has given them all the guarantees and rights that citizens of Venezuela enjoy, on an equal basis.

Our country has always been willing to participate in efforts to bring about peace in Colombia, at the request of the Colombian Government and the relevant players in the conflict and with no intention whatsoever to intervene. The unwavering will of our Government to cooperate in a peaceful settlement was expressed in the dedication and commitment of our former President Hugo Chávez Frías and our current President, Nicolás Maduro Moros, and took the form of supporting the sister Republic of Chile in the peace negotiations held between the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP), a process to which we were invited to participate with Cuba and Norway as guarantors. The parties, which have been holding talks in Havana in the framework of the General Agreement to End the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, signed on 26 August 2012, agreed to a joint communiqué agreement on 19 January 2016, which requests the United Nations to set up a special political mission of this multilateral Organization to act as an international component and coordinator of the tripartite mechanism to monitor and verify a definitive bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, as well as the laying down of arms.

Our country commends that initiative and is grateful for the willingness of the United Nations and all the members of the Security Council, as reflected in the adoption of today's resolution, in order to contribute through a specific function to the overall efforts towards peace in Colombia. We are awaiting the next steps, both of the parties in Colombia and of the Organization, to define the operational aspects, functions and composition of the political mission,

which must take full account of the terms of established in joint communiqué No. 65, issued by the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP, which led to the request for the special political mission I just mentioned.

We are extremely pleased that, in line with what was agreed in the joint communiqué, the resolution recognizes, and makes direct reference to, the contribution of the member States of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) to the special political mission approved by the Council today. We welcome that willingness and we hope that CELAC, through its full commitment to peace in Colombia, will be reflected in the character and functions of the political mission. We therefore encourage considering the possibility of the head of the mission reporting to the rotating CELAC presidency, as our Latin American and Caribbean organization is a committed guarantor of peace in the region.

The countries of CELAC have a prominent role role to play in the composition of the political mission. The members of our political mechanism followed with interest and hope the development of the peace process. In statements issued at their summit meetings, they have expressed their support for the dialogue process between the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP, welcomed the progress made and urged the parties to continue the process aimed at putting an end to the internal armed conflict, which has had affected the political, social and economic development of a sister nation.

Finally, our country wishes to reiterate its full commitment to the negotiation process leading to peace in the sister republic of Colombia. We again welcome the voluntary joint initiative of the Colombian Government and the FARC to turn to the Organization to ask its support in the final phase of the dialogue. We also reiterate our respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and unity of Colombia, as well as its inalienable right to manage its internal affairs without interference or imposition. We note its support for CELAC's cooperation and the inclusion of its members in the political mission, as well as its full conviction that the resolution we adopted today represents a valuable contribution and a positive step towards peace.

This adoption is an important step, but not the last one: it is one more step towards the end of the conflict. From here, therefore, we express the hope that the parties will fulfil what has been agreed and that we will soon see in Colombia a cessation of violence and a lasting peace — with reconciliation, social justice and inclusion for its people.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I thank you, Foreign Minister Nin Novoa, for convening this important meeting. I also thank Foreign Minister Holguín Cuéllar for joining us to mark this very special occasion. It is a pleasure to have her here as a representative of her Government, as a former Ambassador to the United Nations and as someone who has been so personally engaged in this peace process.

In an interview published over the weekend in the newspaper *El Tiempo*, President Obama said,

> "It is harder to end wars than to start them. It requires commitment, it involves taking risks. President Santos and his team have demonstrated unyielding determination to achieve peace."

I know that Foreign Minister Holguín Cuéllar and Colombia's formidable Ambassador her, Ms. Maria Emma Mejía Vélez, share that determination. I know President Obama looks forward to welcoming President Santos Calderón, the Foreign Minister and their whole team to Washington, D.C., next week.

Last month, a small ceremony was held in the central Colombian town of Villavicencio. Presented in small brown coffins, the remains of 29 people who had been killed in the conflict were returned to their relatives. One victim had been abducted and forced to join the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) when he was 11 years old. His father, a 60-year-old farmer, had spent a decade looking for his son. He told a reporter, "it is hard to finally find him under these conditions". That ceremony reflects the toll that this conflict has taken on the Colombian people over the last 50 years.

The National Centre for Historical Memory has documented the killing of 220,000 citizens, while the Government has registered nearly 6 million displaced persons. Colombians have lost loved ones to bombs and bullets, kidnappings and disappearances. They have seen their streets and villages turned into war zones, and they have spent too many years worrying that today might be the day that war strikes home.

It is the prospect of finally ending that violence that brings us here today. After nearly four years of negotiations, the Colombian peace process has yielded

agreements on a set of extraordinarily complex issues, including an accord on victims of the conflict, which made the ceremony in Villavicencio possible.

Colombia is now on the precipice of a historic achievement. Forging a lasting peace agreement will not resolve all of Colombia's challenges, nor will it instantly help heal the deep wounds inflicted over the last five decades. It cannot undo what happened in Villavicencio and so many communities like it. But if the fighting truly ends, then a new and long-overdue chapter can finally begin.

With today's resolution 2261 (2016), the Security Council shows that the United Nations stands with the Colombian people as they forge that new future. The resolution represents the answer of the United Nations to the joint call made by the Government of Colombia and the FARC for United Nations engagement in helping to end the conflict. The requested United Nations observer mission will serve as the international component of a tripartite mechanism that will monitor and verify the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities and be responsible for monitoring the laying down of weapons. The mission will be strengthened by the participation of observers from other countries in the region and will complement the important work of United Nations agencies already in Colombia, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

With its vote today, the United States underscores its continued partnership with Colombia. Just as we have supported the Government since it developed the Plan Colombia strategy, nearly 16 years ago, so have we backed its efforts to negotiate a just and lasting peace agreement — one that should be consistent with Colombia's domestic and international legal obligations and make accountability and the rule of law the bedrock of sustainable peace. As Colombia works towards that goal, the United States will remain at its side, ready to assist in the hard work ahead, in the lead-up to the final peace agreement and then in the challenging process of implementation that will follow, where what is put in writing must be translated into practice.

Victims and vulnerable individuals will need access to justice, protection and dispute-resolution services. Communities that suffered in the conflict will need basic security and additional public services. Former combatants will need to be reintegrated into society. Land mines will have to be removed so that communities can return to their lands and more rural economic development can occur. The United States will support critical Government initiatives such as those aimed at expanding the rule of law and economic opportunity in former conflict zones, bolstering civilian law enforcement, supporting the victims of conflict and expanding protections for human rights.

In conclusion, back in September, President Santos Calderón travelled to Havana, where he reached an agreement with the FARC to complete a peace deal by March. He said at the time,

> "We are adversaries, on different sides, but today we advance in the same direction, the direction of peace".

Today, Colombia has taken another step in that direction of peace. The road ahead will surely have its bumps, and much will rest on implementation. But because of the Colombian Government's commitment — its "unyielding determination", as President Obama put it — to fight for peace, the destination is in sight. With today's vote, the United Nations recognizes Colombia's achievement and offers its collective support as the country completes its journey.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are pleased, Sir, to see you presiding over the Security Council today. We also welcome the participation in today's meeting of Foreign Minister María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar.

We note the major significance of the agreements signed in Havana on 23 September 2015 by Colombia's President, Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, and the leader of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) rebel group, Timoleón Jiménez, on the timetable for a final peace agreement, as well as the joint communiqué of 19 January agreed on by both sides, which requests international support for the peace process, including the establishment of a United Nations mission, which is what we have done in today's unanimous resolution 2261 (2016).

We believe that the countries of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States will respond positively to the parties' request that they provide the mission with unarmed observers. We commend these important agreements and the diligent and determined efforts of the representatives of the Government of Colombia and of the FARC, as well as the active contributions made to the negotiating process by the guarantor countries — Cuba and Norway — and the

observer countries, Venezuela and Chile. We take special note of Cuba's role in the process of working out mutually acceptable solutions to the complex problems facing the participants.

In Moscow we have followed the progress of the negotiations attentively and with interest, and have consistently supported bringing to a speedy conclusion the peace process aimed at ending Colombia's half-century of internal armed conflict. We are sure that the agreements that have been reached, along with the resolution adopted today, will be important milestones on the country's road to peace and will enable it to achieve a final settlement and implement it effectively.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the Security Council's unanimous adoption today of resolution 2261 (2016), on the establishment of a United Nations mission in Colombia. I would also like to welcome the Foreign Minister of Uruguay as he presides over today's meeting, as well as Ms. Holguín Cuéllar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia.

Colombia's peace process has recently made major progress. The Government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia are expected to sign a peace agreement that marks the end of a civil war that has lasted approximately half a century. That will not only help to achieve peace and stability in Colombia soon, it will contribute greatly to the promotion of stability and development in the region. It will also serve as an important example for finding solutions to other hotspot issues. In that regard, China would like to welcome and commend the efforts of the Colombian Government and the relevant parties to conduct a dialogue for peace. We also greatly appreciate the important role that Ms. Holguín Cuéllar played in the process.

China hopes that the Security Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 2261 (2016) will help to encourage the signing and full implementation of a final peace agreement by all the parties involved as soon as possible. We support the United Nations, on a basis of Colombia's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, in accordance with the needs of the Colombian Government, in its work to prepare to speedily deploy a mission aimed at providing constructive assistance to the peace process. China is ready to engage with Council members and the international community to work tirelessly to achieve peace, stability, development and prosperity in Colombia and the entire region as soon as possible.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Gabriel García Márquez should have lived two years longer. If he had, he would have been here to witness this truly historic moment for Colombia and Colombians. Today Gabo would be an extraordinarily happy man, because he personally stood for peace for us all. As he said, in the midst of confusion and disenchantment, we continued to believe, in an obstinate and perhaps illusory way, that peace was possible. Today Colombians have shown that to be true and have put five decades of conflict behind them. The time has come to congratulate the Government of Colombia and all Colombians.

Today we, the members of the Security Council, have the honour, along with the entire international community, to be able to bear witness to the reconciliation of all Colombians, represented here by my dear friend Foreign Minister María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar. It is also a historic day for the Council, because we have adopted resolution 2261 (2016) with 15 votes in favour and 15 sponsors, something that has happened only three times in the past three years. The resolution assigns to the United Nations a major role in helping to write what is probably one of the most promising pages of recent history. As always, Spain is here for Colombia. We offer it our experience in the area of peace processes, as Members of the United Nations and as members of the European Union, from which we will channel assistance to Colombia and its people. Colombia should know that Spain will always be by its side.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the adoption of resolution 2261 (2016) and the establishment of a United Nations mission tasked with monitoring the implementation of the ceasefire that is awaited in the next few months in Colombia as part of the peace process under way since 2012.

It has been very unusual, in the recent history of the Council, for a country to turn to it asking for assistance in the implementation of a negotiated peace process. The request that was sent to us to that end a few days ago by the President of Colombia, in keeping with the joint request of the parties to the conflict, clearly demonstrates the extent to which the United Nations constitutes a central, legitimate and trustworthy player in the maintenance of international peace and security throughout the world.

The resolution that we have just adopted shows that our Organization and more specifically the Council

were able to respond positively to the appeal made to them. France welcomes this and would like to thank the United Kingdom. We cherish the hope that the mission whose establishment has been decided today will constitute a positive element that will promote the early conclusion of peace negotiations, a peace for which the people of Colombia have waited too long.

France lends its full support to the process, which was launched in 2012 under the auspices of the Colombian President. Bilaterally speaking, the French Development Agency in 2015 lent more than $300 million to the Colombian Government to promote the implementation of the agreement on rural development. An additional $200 million should be forthcoming this year. Our country has also lent its experience to Colombia in the field of transitional justice as well as land governance.

France also actively contributed to the creation last January of the European Union Trust Fund in support of the Colombian peace process. The resolution that we have just adopted serves as the beginning of the process that will lead the United Nations to play a decisive role in ensuring the conditions necessary for lasting peace in Colombia. France will remain resolutely mobilized to ensure that this process is a success — for Columbia first and foremost but also for the United Nations.

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): I wish warmly to thank Foreign Minister Nin Novoa, and I welcome Foreign Minister Holguín Cuéllar to the Council today.

New Zealand was very pleased to co-sponsor resolution 2261 (2016) and welcomes its unanimous adoption. The Council's flexible and quick response to the request for a political mission is a welcome development. As others have noted, it is a welcome and somewhat unusual development that a country should come to the Council of its own accord for help, and even better that it is doing so in the context of a peace process. We hope that this mission, as the international component and coordinator of the tripartite monitoring and verification mechanism, will generate further confidence in the Colombian peace process.

New Zealand congratulates President Santos Calderón for the courage and determination that he and his country have demonstrated in pushing for a durable solution to a protracted conflict. We, too, commend the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia for taking the road to peace and for sticking with it through the long negotiations. We also congratulate and thank Cuba and Norway, as well as Chile and Venezuela, for their vital roles in shepherding the peace process, and we welcome the role that the region as a whole has played in the peace process. It represents a positive example of a regionally led solution to a long-standing conflict.

New Zealand is committed to supporting Colombia's efforts to find lasting peace. We are pleased that our partnership with Colombia and the burgeoning relationship with the Pacific Alliance will be further strengthened with the opening of a New Zealand embassy in Bogotá in the near future. We wish Colombia well in advancing the peace process in the coming months. No one expects the road ahead to be easy, but as has been demonstrated today, the Council and the international community stand ready to help.

Mr. Akahori (Japan) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, I am grateful to you for having convened this important meeting. We also highly value the leadership of the United Kingdom, which prepared resolution 2261 (2016) in a very effective manner. I welcome the Foreign Minister of Colombia, María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar, and I congratulate her on the adoption of the resolution.

We fully support the peace process in Colombia, and Japan had the pleasure of being a co-sponsor of the resolution. I hope that the peace process in Colombia will make further progress and that a final agreement will soon be reached as a result of the adoption of the resolution.

Japan has been cooperating in rehabilitating the victims of the conflict and in anti-mining efforts, among other activities, and it intends to continue its support. Japan is also prepared to consider not only financial support but also support in terms of human capital for the special political mission.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): Ukraine is very pleased to see that the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia have achieved major breakthroughs in the peace process negotiations. We welcome the agreements reached by the sides on transitional justice, the laying down of arms and a timetable for signing a final agreement.

The peace talks in Havana brought historic progress toward a final peace agreement to put an end to the more than 50-year-old armed conflict in Colombia, the longest in Latin America. We applaud the fact that

peace is now closer than ever for the Colombian people. They deserve a just and durable peace.

We also underline the important roles played by Norway and Cuba as guarantors of the peace process, as well as Chile and Venezuela as accompanying countries.

In the spirit of strong support for the peace process in the Republic of Colombia, Ukraine welcomes resolution 2261 (2016), adopted today, and was glad to co-sponsor this historic document. We also express our appreciation to the British delegation for its leadership in preparing the draft and in conducting the negotiations that led to its successful adoption.

This decision will contribute to the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in peacebuilding in post-conflict situations and will provide the support required to advance peace, human rights and development for all citizens in Colombia.

We believe that the Colombian initiative to engage the United Nations as the international component of the tripartite mechanism will be a success story and help to bring stability to the region. This experience should be followed and replicated where applicable.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): I should like to greet Foreign Minister Holguín Cuéllar of Colombia and join earlier speakers in congratulating the delegation of Colombia on this historic and momentous occasion, which undoubtedly marks the beginning of the end of the long-running conflict in that country. In this regard, I wish to also express our position to the United Kingdom delegation for its constructive and proactive role in leading the negotiations on resolution 2261 (2016), just adopted by the Council.

The resolution just adopted authorizes the establishment of a special political mission of the United Nations, comprising unarmed international observers responsible for the monitoring and verification of the laying down of arms and a part of the tripartite mechanism that will monitor and verify the definitive bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities between the parties, consistent with the joint communiqué of 19 January 2016 (see S/2016/53).

Pending the commencement of the mission, which will be led by a Special Representative of the Secretary-General and with personnel contributions from the States members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, Malaysia urges both the Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia — Ejercito del Pueblo to spare no effort towards the expeditious conclusion of the final peace agreement. We further believe that the establishment of the mission will contribute positively to increasing the level of comfort and confidence between the two parties, with a view to consolidating the gains already achieved.

We firmly believe that taking this step towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Colombia will pave the way towards ensuring lasting peace, security and prosperity for all sections of society in the country. Malaysia looks forward to receiving proposals from the Secretary-General on the establishment and operationalization of the mission, and reaffirms its readiness to work closely with all Council members, concerned partners and stakeholders in that regard.

Mr. Gimolieca (Angola): We welcome and support the peace process in Colombia between the Government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia — Ejercito del Pueblo (FARC-EP). We praise the decision and commitment of the parties to put their differences aside and to engage in fruitful negotiations aimed at putting an end to the conflict that has affected the country for many decades. We commend the Governments of Cuba and Norway for facilitating the negotiations, and the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP for signing, respecting and implementing the final peace agreement in order to consolidate peace for the well-being of the Colombian people.

Finally, we hope that in the future the United Nations political mission will carry out its task with professionalism and impartiality.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and to thank you and your delegation for your efforts this month, culminating in the adoption of the historic resolution 2261 (2016), which will consolidate peace in Colombia on a solid foundation and with the strong support of the international community. In that respect, I welcome Ms. María Ángela Holguín Cuellar and to thank her both for attending this historic meeting and for the important steps being taken by Colombia.

On behalf of the Egyptian Government, I congratulate the Government and the people of Colombia on taking this historic step to put an end to years of tension between the Government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, which

has claimed thousands of victims. We hope that a final agreement will be reached in March, and wish Colombia every success in that regard.

Like all other members of the Security Council, Egypt sponsored and favour voted in of resolution 2261 (2016). We are convinced of the importance of the political mission to be established pursuant to the resolution, which would be in charge of observing the implementation of the Final Agreement.

In conclusion, I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to all those who mediated and thanks to whom we have reached this historic moment, in particular Cuba, Norway, Chile, Venezuela and all other stakeholders. We also like thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for all its efforts to facilitate this important resolution.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Senegal is pleased to see you, Sir, personally presiding over this historic meeting.

While watching a Colombian film, I heard it said that a people that does not know its history is condemned to see that history repeat itself indefinitely. The Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia have clearly read their history books because now, through the Final Agreement, which we have all awaited and hoped for, Colombia is now writing a new page of its history.

Seen from an African perspective, the historic action that Colombia has just taken is a ray of hope, in particular as many conflicts continue to rage in my continent. Senegal would therefore like to add its voice in congratulating the guarantor countries of this very promising process — the Republic of Cuba and the Kingdom of Norway — and those that decided to assist the process, namely, the Republic of Chile and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. We also wish to congratulate our friend, the Ambassador of Great Britain, on his outstanding work in facilitating the adoption of resolution 2261 (2016), which Senegal, along with all the other members of the Council, sponsored and voted in favour of.

Mr. Nin Novoa (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uruguay.

On behalf of my country, I wish to express my great satisfaction at the adoption of resolution 2261 (2016), and congratulate the friendly country of Colombia on taking this essential step to achieve lasting peace. The resolution establishes the role that the international community, through the United Nations, will play in monitoring the implementation of one of the most complex aspects of the post-conflict process: the conditions ceasefire and bilateral and definitive cessation of hostilities and abandonment of arms by both parties to the conflict, the Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia — Ejercito del Pueblo.

The resolution enjoyed the unanimous support of the entire Security Council, and surely of the entire international community. That is so in large part because of the firm conviction and determination demonstrated by both parties to attain lasting peace. This attitude is clearly reflected in the text adopted, which recognizes the unambiguous national ownership of the implementation of the Final Agreement and establishes a political mission with unarmed observers, which says a lot about the political and institutional maturity of Colombia.

I also wish to acknowledge the important role played as guarantors of the process by a number of countries, including Cuba and Norway; Chile and Venezuela, which supported the process; and the United Kingdom as facilitator of the resolution.

There is one last effort remaining before the definitive peace agreement is signed on 23 March, after which it will be subject to the political will of the Colombian people.

I am proud to be presiding over this meeting for two reasons. The first is the clear empathy that we feel for the Colombian people; the second is that this event makes the entire American continent free of armed conflict. We, the inhabitants of the Americas, and the world should be proud of this. Uruguay will continue to support this process so long as the parties deem necessary.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia.

Ms. Holguín Cuellar (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate Uruguay on the excellent manner in which it has conducted the work of the Security Council this month. Uruguay began its mandate as a non-permanent member by presiding

over the Council and overseeing complex issues. Now Uruguay is presiding over a meeting that is of tremendous importance for Colombia.

On behalf of my Government, I wish to thank you, Sir, and each of the members of the Security Council for the unanimous adoption of resolution 2261 (2016), which establishes a special political mission in my country, with the specific mandate to participate, for a period of 12 months, in the international component of a tripartite mechanism to monitor and verify the ceasefire and bilateral and definitive cessation of hostilities and abandonment of arms. This decision of the Council is a demonstration of its commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes. It is an opportunity for the United Nations and the international community to enjoy success as they are being asked for their support in the implementation of an agreement in a conflict that is being resolved by national stakeholders through negotiation and dialogue.

We are facing a situation in which we have sought and reached our own solutions. We have come to the Security Council to ask for its support in implementing the agreement for the abandonment of weapons and in monitoring and verifying the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities. I would like to convey to the members of the Council that their willingness to work with Colombia on this matter will be essential to the success of the process. We know that by remianing focused on our mandate we will achieve conclusive and definitive results for peace in Colombia.

Ever since he took office, President Juan Manuel Santos has been convinced that, after half a century of violence, it was possible to end the conflict in Colombia. He therefore outlined a peace policy that would make it possible to build a prosperous, modern and safe society that values and benefits from the dividends of peace. The negotiations enjoyed the valuable support of the Governments of Cuba and Norway as guarantors, and of Chile and Venezuela as accompanying countries. Colombia will always be deeply grateful to them, and exceedingly appreciative of their dedication and commitment.

We have also had the very valuable and considerable ongoing support of the countries of our hemisphere. European countries have been greatly supportive of our peace efforts and eager to assist in the post-conflict phase. We have received a constant outpouring of support from countries in Asia in our quest for peace. Africa has also joined in this demonstration of solidarity with Colombia. The Secretary-General has supported our peace negotiations from the beginning, sending positive messages to our country and rallying the closest members of his team around the issue. His Special Envoy for this stage of the negotiations was tasked with explaining how the system works in anticipation of a request for the creation of the special political mission for the monitoring and verification of the ceasefire agreement. We sincerely thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, a truly great friend of Colombia.

With regard to the work and preparation required to bring resolution 2261 (2016) before us today, I wish to thank the Government of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Matthew Rycroft and the diplomats of his Mission for their willingness and their role as penholders of the resolution. Its adoption was made possible by the cooperation and contribution of all the members of the Security Council. We are deeply grateful to the members for helping us to draft a clear and detailed resolution with a specific mandate. Such a resolution will help to build peace in Colombia.

This specific mandate of the Security Council will benefit all Colombians and help to build trust in a country determined to overcome the aftermath of a decades-long conflict that caused too much suffering for generations. We see our future with hope and faith in our capacity for the reconciliation that is essential to restoring our society. The international community will see a Colombia that will fully embrace its enormous potential, its human capacity and its natural resources not only to build a more just and prosperous society, but to make an even greater contribution to development in our America and the rest of the world.

Today, thanks to the Council, we are providing that which the Buendía family in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* — the greatest literary work of Gabriel Garcia Márquez, the most renowned Colombian of all — never had, that is, a second chance for Colombians here on Earth. We will rewrite our entire history as one of life, hope and peace.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.